

mistress would be willing to satiate
my animal urges.

The irony is that women friends tell
me horror stories of endless hornyness
and husbands flacidly snoring away
the night. I yearn to help them, ease
the edge off their 'blue clit' ache.

But my wife says that god is punishing
us both -- she to be forever tormented
by a horn-dog man to appease her
Irish Catholic guilt and me forever
cursed by a woman whose libido is
lost in a time twat and whose lament
can be heard in Garboesqueness late
at night, "I vont to be alone."

She's only partially right. Another
part of the Victorian woman loves to be
endlessly pursued and caught and
taken under protest. But we're both
too Victorian to admit it.

THE ALL-PURPOSE STOMACH

Putting food into it is the least
of its talents.

It's a comfort to the wife and kids.

A babysitter.

A lover.

The kids climb on its imposing mountainousness
(while Dad sleeps on the couch) in one wild
fling before bedtime.

The wife has so much more than love handles.

It's a steel-belted radial 500 that runs her
over with love.

And food.

Dad tries but the stomach has its
own garden now right in the backyard ...

zucchini, beans, carrots, pumpkins,
and fresh strawberries, blueberries, etc.,
all growing within the length of a colon ...

Dad resists, but home-baked breads, cakes,
pies, season after season, a stomach for all
seasons.

Dad says, "It's genetic -- my stomach runs in
the family," or "I'm doing more exercises now
so I'll firm it up soon."

But then hot, fat blueberry muffins and

strawberry-rhubarb pie with whipped cream
and a big batch of oatmeal-raisin cookies
or tollhouse chocolate chip ... and the
stomach does firm up, round and full and
content and securely protruding from
the family album.

-- Leo Mailman

Cape Elizabeth ME

PEPPERS:

ON A NEWSPAPER REVIEW OF A ROBERT ALTMAN FILM: "THREE WOMEN"
MORELIA MARKET, MEXICO

Peppers green, peppers red, peppers blue
peppers peppers peppers everywhere
hide me, I scream, I can't get away from peppers
jalapeno peppers, little deadly peppers, ground peppers
peppers black, peppers that make you sneeze
the pepper that ate Tokyo
peppers that make you swallow your teeth
peppers bell, superpepper, the pepper from outer space
peppers as harmless as mushrooms
behind every great man is a good pepper
peppers that will make your car battery sing with volts
peppers that will strip the chrome off your bumpers
peppers that will melt the fillings in your teeth
peppers in my chorizo, peppers in my eggs
cream and sugar in your coffee, señor, or peppers
chili peppers and doctor peppers
peppers in my curried chicken
peppers on peppers
the day of the peppers, pepper uppers, pepper trees
peppers eating out a whole new stomach
peppers between my teeth
a girl named Pepper
peppers that sank a thousand ships
I admit that the flies don't like them
and they keep the meat from rotting
and they don't stink like onions and garlic
but they are in the restaurants on the table, pickled and
smiling
like there is nothing to worry about
I order something safe
and some sadist in the back of the kitchen
is salting my waffles with peppers
they come floating with bananas in my cornflakes
they sit like gate-crashers on the edge of my plate